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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Father of mercies, teach us to be patient and kind. Bid us to understand one another before we idealize or condemn. Keep us aware of the cries of humanity, and use us as forces for good.

Continue to sustain the Members of this legislative body. Use them to enable others to realize their best. Empower them to seize opportunities to bring cheer to the despairing, companionship to the lonely, understanding to the perplexed, and hope to the downtrodden.

Renew a right spirit in us all as we seek to do Your will. And, Lord, continue to protect our military men and women in harm's way. Show Your strength, Lord, so that we may celebrate Your power. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in a couple of minutes we will resume work on

the Defense authorization bill. This morning we have an order for 90 minutes of debate prior to the two votes related to the minimum wage. Following those votes, Senator LEVIN will offer an amendment related to Iraq on which there will be 5 hours of debate. Many Senators have expressed a desire to speak during that time, and we may be able to set up blocks of controlled time in order to line up speakers. Following debate on the Levin amendment, we will set that amendment aside and begin debate on Senator KERRY's Iraq language. Although there is no limit for debate on that amendment, we anticipate that we will lock in a debate structure for that amendment as well. This is our second week of consideration of the bill, and last night, to ensure that we will finish the bill in a reasonable time, we filed cloture on the Defense authorization bill. Senators will have until 1 o'clock today to file their first-degree amendments.

With respect to the Iraq language, it is my expectation that we will vote on the Iraq amendments prior to the cloture vote which would occur on Thursday. Senator WARNER and Senator LEVIN have cleared a large number of amendments and will continue to work to clear additional amendments as we go forward. In addition, there will likely be germane amendments debated and voted once cloture is invoked.

Having said that, I look forward to constructive debate throughout the day and evening on the two Iraq amendments before us.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate is now in the middle of an important

debate on Iraq, but it wasn't so long ago that we found ourselves in an important debate on another issue, immigration reform. It took weeks of negotiations for the Senate to develop the basic framework for legislation that both Democrats and Republicans could support. Then it took several more weeks to work through dozens of amendments and pass a bill, a comprehensive immigration reform bill.

The day we finally passed immigration legislation, I came to the floor to say it was a good day for the Senate but a day not for celebrating. News reports from all over the country this morning show why I was right. For example, from the Washington Post today:

House Republicans have largely given up on passing a broad rewrite of the nation's immigration laws before the November elections. House GOP leaders said today they would hold hearings even before naming conferees.

The truth is out. For all their tough talk about securing our borders, House Republicans have no intention of actually accomplishing the goal. They want to defeat comprehensive immigration reform of the kind we passed in the Senate, a bipartisan bill, and House leaders are willing to sacrifice the security of the American people to accomplish what I believe are their selfish goals.

Let's be perfectly clear. This idea of field hearings is just a front, an attempt to delay, impede, and obstruct a bipartisan effort to strengthen our borders and fix our immigration system. The House doesn't need hearings to write a bill because they have already passed their bill. They don't need hearings to name conferees. The only reason for hearings is to pander to the rightwing base of their party and avoid the hard work of negotiating a final bill with the Senate for the American people.

It has been clear for weeks now that House Republicans have no interest in passing an immigration bill this year.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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